



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**N.J. MAN JAILED IN FEDERAL I.D. THEFT AND CREDIT CARD
SCHEME; OVER 1,000 VICTIMS LOST OVER \$500,000**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JOEL JUSTE, a/k/a "Joel Juste Edmond," a/k/a "Steve," was sentenced in Manhattan federal court today by United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD to 41 months in prison on charges of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and conspiracy to commit access device fraud in a scheme that had more than 1,000 victims and that cost consumers more than \$500,000.

JUSTE was arrested and his Indictment unsealed on September 15, 2003. During his plea on March 31, 2004, JUSTE admitted that he and his co-conspirators participated in a conspiracy to activate credit cards without authorization by obtaining personal information regarding the cardholders and then using the credit cards to buy merchandise. As part of the scheme, according to the Indictment, JUSTE and his co-conspirators intercepted credit cards that were being mailed to

the respective users, and used computers to access credit reporting agencies' databases to obtain credit history reports on the credit card account holders.

According to the Indictment, JUSTE and his co-conspirators then used that information on the illegally obtained credit reports to activate the stolen cards. According to the Indictment, once the cards were activated, JUSTE and his co-conspirators used the cards to make purchases, then sold those items for profit. According to the Indictment, during the course of the conspiracy, more than 1,000 credit history reports were illegally obtained. In his plea agreement, JUSTE admitted that and his co-conspirators caused a loss to consumers exceeding \$500,000 in unauthorized charges.

Judge BUCHWALD today ordered JUSTE to pay restitution in the amount of \$711,772.10

JUSTE, 28, is a resident of West Orange, New Jersey. JUSTE also previously agreed to the forfeiture of his interest in 2002 Mercedes that was purchased with the fruits of JUSTE's criminal activity.

Mr. KELLEY praised the efforts of the United States Postal Inspection Service and the United States Secret Service in investigating this case. He said cases involving several co-conspirators were pending.

Assistant United States Attorney ANTHONY S. BARKOW is in charge of the prosecution.

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